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ABSTRACT

Lakes, streams, and wetlands serve many purposes for the people of the state of Kentucky and are necessary and valued elements of its natural resources. The Water Watch program promotes individual responsibility for a common resource, educates people about the use and protection of local water resources, provides recreational opportunities through group activities, and gives citizens greater access to their government. The program has won interest from teachers and students as well as from state natural resource departments around the country. Described in this document are specific activities and operations of this program, program materials, program performance and evaluation, a statistical summary, and the Water Watch Stream Monitoring Project. (CW)

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WATER WATCH PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Kentucky Division of Water

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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Background Information and Volunteer Project Outline for Citizens Involvement in Water Resources Management.

An overview publication of the Water Watch Advisory Collection
October 1988

EOSD 174

Introduction

The Kentucky WATER WATCH program is administered by the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Cabinet's Division of Water. Launched in 1985, WATER WATCH promotes individual responsibility for a common resource, educates the people about the use and protection of local water resources, provides a recreational opportunity through group activities, and gives citizens more access to their government. Objectives include: promoting individual responsibility for a common resource by fostering a public role in drawing attention to specific problem situations; enhancing citizen understanding and support through a strong program of public education; and communicating the value of environmental quality in attracting industry and tourism to the state.

Specific Activities and Operations

After a group is formed, they identify the stream, lake or wetland they want to adopt and submit an "adoption" form for approval to the Division of Water. After the adoption is approved, the WATER WATCH group then promotes community awareness and protection of their adopted water resource. By involving individuals and representatives from the following list of people and organizations concerned with the wise management of community waters, the group develops an effective network for protecting the state's water quality and instilling community pride in this resource.

- Concerned citizen and civic groups
- Canoeing and recreational groups
- Area landowners
- Home builders' associations
- Industrial dischargers
- Parks and recreation facilities
- Municipal water and wastewater treatment operators
- Environmental groups
- Fishing and hunting clubs
- Area farmers
- State, county and city officials
- Community health officials

- Local media networks
- Environmental policy officials
- Conservation officers
- State park naturalists
- University water specialists

WATER WATCH Program Materials

Each WATER WATCH group receives training from the WATER WATCH coordinator, a WATER WATCH Program Manual and two field guides (A Field Guide to Kentucky's Lakes and Wetlands and A Field Guide to Kentucky's Rivers and Streams). Since Kentucky has such a rich diversity in both flowing and still waters, it was decided that two field guides were needed since our rivers and streams have uniquely different environments than our lakes and wetlands. The manual gives helpful information such as:

- An introduction to the program
- Understanding the need for a WATER WATCH program
- How to organize a WATER WATCH group
- Learning about a watershed
- Working with the media to gain support for group activities
- A variety of WATER WATCH projects
- An overview of Kentucky's regulatory program
- A listing of state, federal and environmental groups who can help
- A glossary of environmental terms used throughout the materials

Program Performance and Evaluation

Since its beginning, over 200 groups were established with more than 1,800 members statewide, and over 22,000 people have received an overview telling them about the program (see Figures 1 and 2). WATER WATCH is building a strong constituency to support water quality in Kentucky, as evidenced by the 1986 session of the Kentucky General Assembly. During the session, the legislature approved Governor Wallace G. Wilkinson's budget which allocated a million dollar increase in Division of Water funds for FY 88-90. This increase allows for continued implementation of the Kentucky Water Management Plan which "spawned" the WATER WATCH Program.

FIGURE 1
KENTUCKY WATER WATCH GROUP NETWORKS

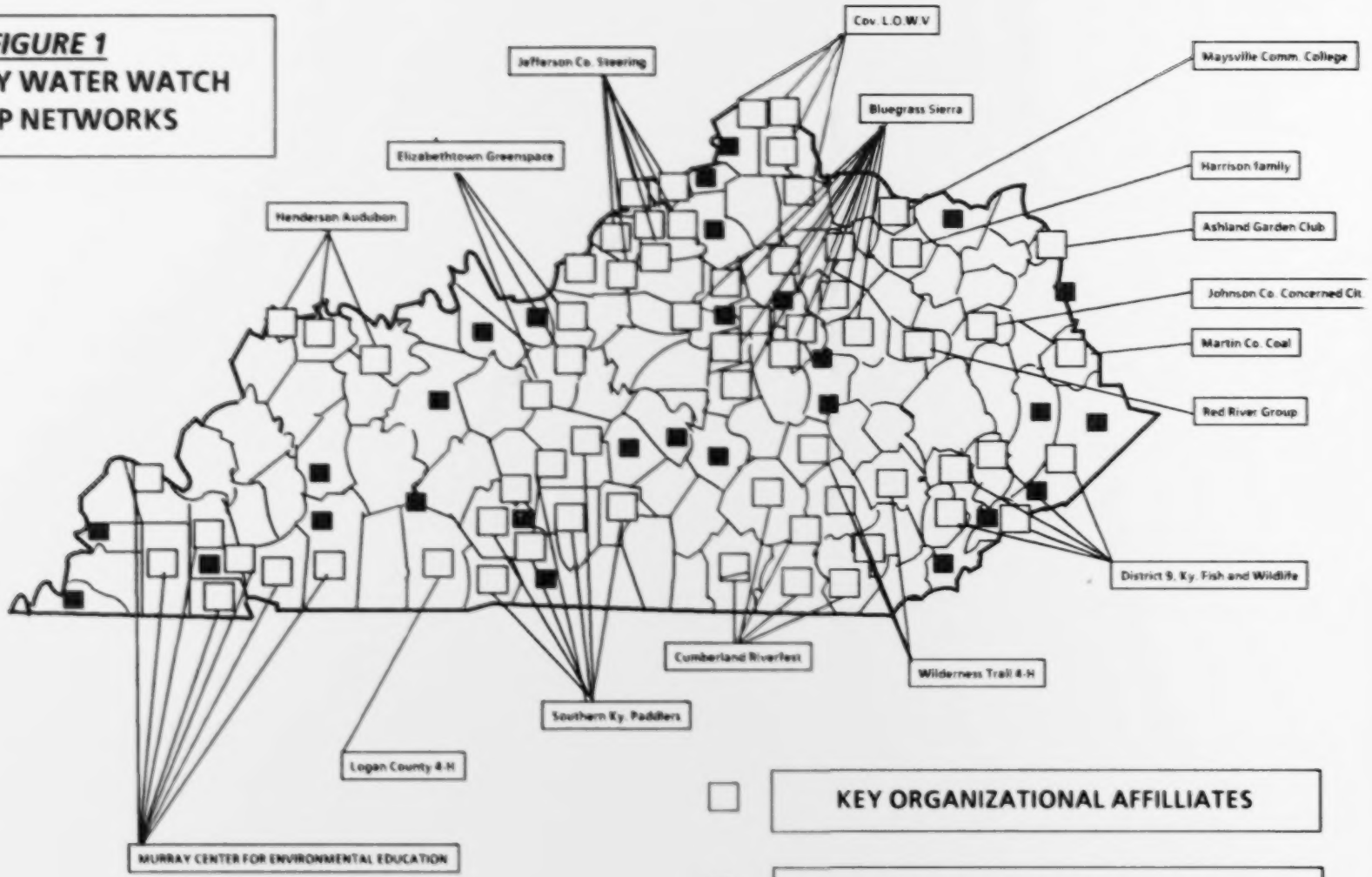


FIGURE 2

WATER WATCH PROGRAM

STATISTICAL SUMMARY

OCTOBER 1, 1988

Resources Affected

Adopted Streams	220
Adopted Lakes	18
Adopted Wetlands	7
Adopted Underground Systems	8
Total Adopted Resources	253
Volunteer Chemical Monitoring Stations	65

People and Training

Number Receiving Overview Presentation From Agency Staff	22,430
Number Receiving Basic Training Program	1820
Number Attending Advanced Workshops	270
Total Number of Groups	>200
Core Leadership	150-250
Training Programs Held	92
Training Programs Scheduled	15

An unexpected result of the WATER WATCH program has been the enthusiastic response from teachers and school children, since the program was originally designed for adult public participation. WATER WATCH training is being offered at in-service sessions for teachers at regional community colleges and in several local school systems including the Jefferson County School system (the state's largest metropolitan area) and there have been numerous requests for the field guides to be used as curricula in the classroom.

WATER WATCH - a national effort

In the interest of having WATER WATCH gain national recognition and other states adopting WATER WATCH programs, the manual, field guides, posters and bumper stickers were sent to the Division of Water's counterpart in all states (see Figure 3). We've received inquiries from Texas, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Tennessee, Colorado, Mississippi, Alabama, West Virginia, and South Carolina. The Kentucky Division of Water would be pleased to offer assistance to states who want to start a WATER WATCH program; in fact, we have recently loaned the "You Otter Care About Water" poster negatives to South Carolina to use in promoting their new program, New York sent a representative to Kentucky to talk with our WATER WATCH coordinator and New Jersey has instituted a similar program. As other states "get on the water wagon", we hope to have a national effort to promote Ollie Otter as a symbol for clean water such as Smokey the Bear has been for protecting our forests.

FIGURE 3

NATIONAL CONTACTS FOR THE WATER WATCH PROGRAM

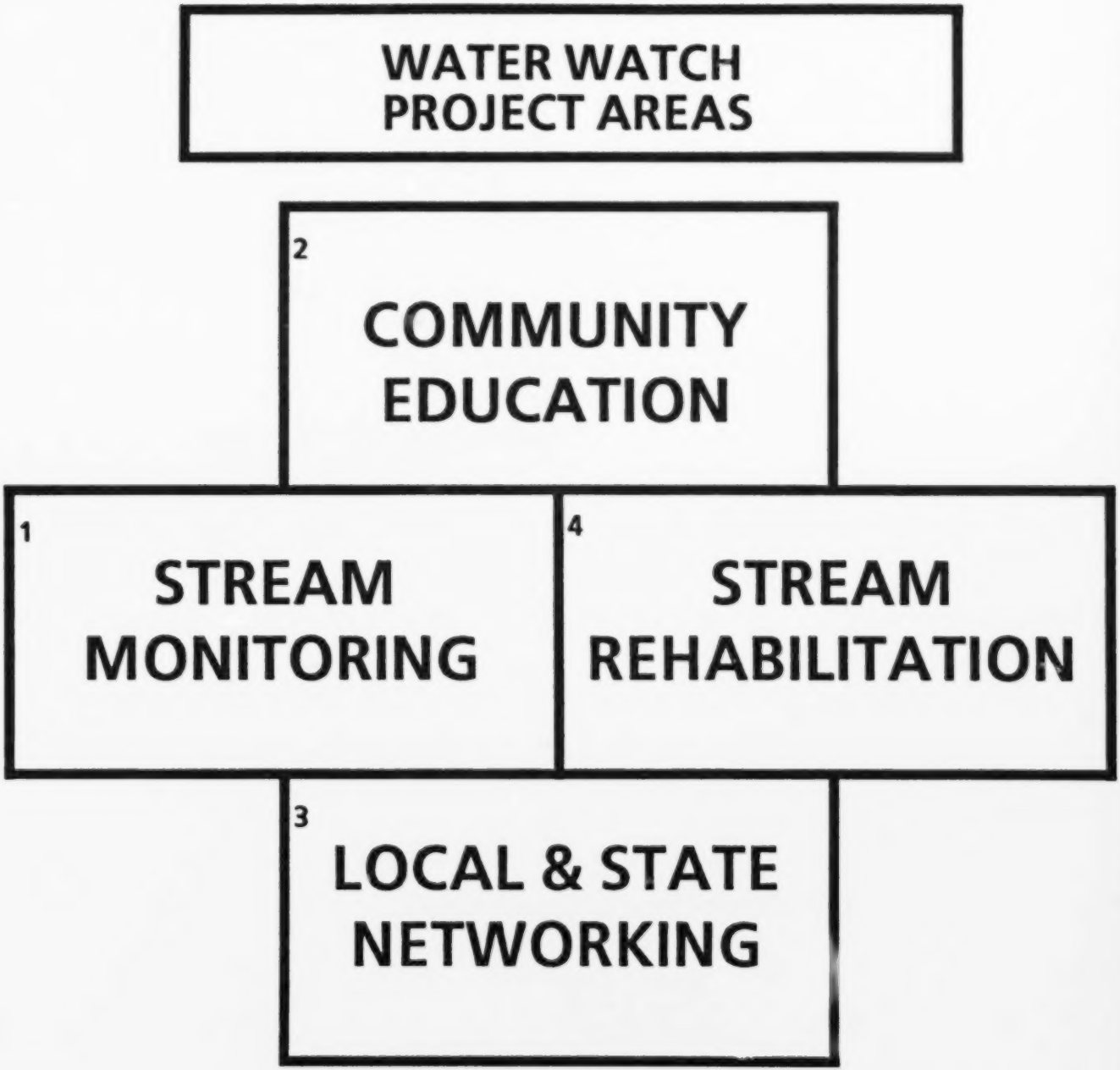
WE ARE STRIVING TO BUILD A NATIONAL BASE FOR IDEA DEVELOPEMENT AND INFORMATION SHARING TO AID OUR DIVISION AND ITS VOLUNTEER GROUPS.

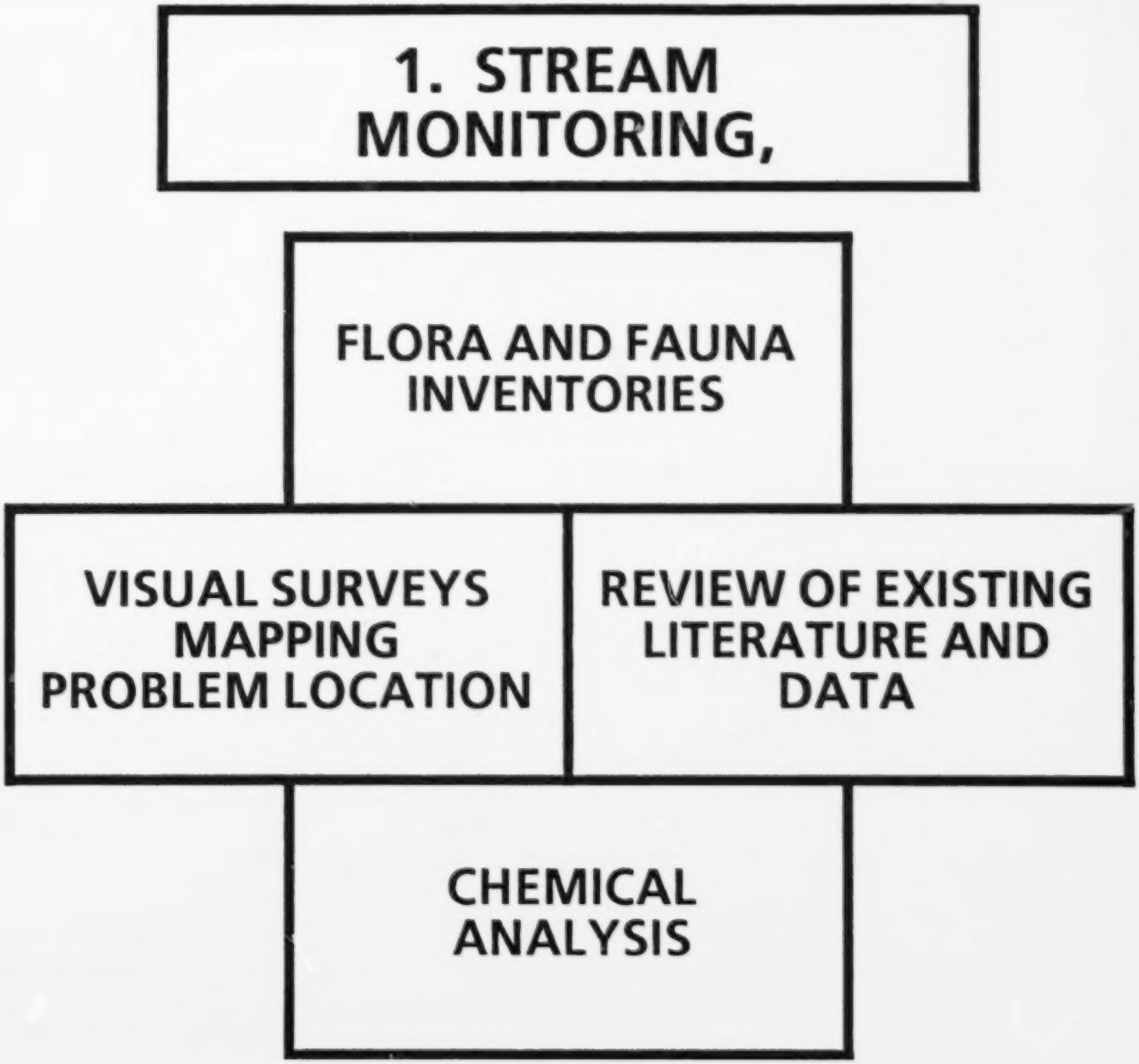
□ CONTACTS MADE TO GAIN INITIAL IDEAS FOR PROGRAM DEVELOPEMENT

▲ RETURN INQUIRIES FROM STATES AND AGENCIES STARTING THEIR OWN WATER WATCH PROGRAMS

● MAILING TO ALL COUNTERPART AGENCIES 1/15/86

FOR INITIAL PROGRAM DEVELOPEMENT


WATER WATCH
PROJECT AREAS
2
COMMUNITY
EDUCATION
1
STREAM
MONITORING
4
STREAM
REHABILITATION
3
LOCAL & STATE
NETWORKING


1. STREAM MONITORING,
FLORA AND FAUNA INVENTORIES
VISUAL SURVEYS MAPPING PROBLEM LOCATION
REVIEW OF EXISTING LITERATURE AND DATA
CHEMICAL ANALYSIS

2. COMMUNITY EDUCATION

TEACHERS WORKSHOPS

SCHOOL PROGRAMS

SPECIAL EVENTS AND AWARENESS DAYS

COMMUNITY GROUP PRESENTATIONS AND MEDIA PROGRAMS

3. STATE AND LOCAL NETWORKING

WORKING WITH ELECTED OFFICIALS

GETTING INVOLVED WITH EXISTING STATE WATER RESOURCE GROUPS

GETTING THE MOST OUT OF GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

PARTICIPATING IN DECISION MAKING HEARINGS AND MEETINGS

4. STREAM REHABILITATION

BANK
STABILIZATION
EROSION CONTROL

TRASH CLEANUPS

FISH STOCKING

BUFFER ZONE
IMPROVEMENT

Water Watch Stream Monitoring Project

Volunteer chemical testing program at over 65 sites across Kentucky

_____Trend Monitoring

This is our current program of monitoring using portable water testing kits. Regular test intervals over time will give us a look at improvements or reductions in water quality. This type of project will allow us to sort out the seasonal variations from long-term changes. For this to have good effect we need to settle in for the long haul over a period of years.

_____Stream Characterization

This involves a short-term series of tests over a number of sites. This testing covers a period of one or two weeks sampling all major tributaries in the watershed. Comparisons are then drawn geographically instead of over time. Results can be logged and graphed for comparison. This is an intensive short-term project that can provide some useful information in locating water quality problems; however, results can be misleading due to seasonal variations noted above.

_____Water Quality Problem Searches

In case of a suspected water quality problem, your team-if interested could be called upon to conduct a search for the source. This would involve starting above the suspected source and sampling at regular distances downstream until the impact is no longer apparent. If no source is known, it would involve starting low on the watershed and proceeding upstream until the source is found.

_____Compliance Monitoring

This involves monitoring the discharge of an industry or wastewater treatment plant on your stream. This type of monitoring would require additional training and coordination. It would also involve strict reporting and procedural requirements.

_____Biological Monitoring

Training is available for biological assesment of streams. Population and species diversity studies are invaluable in determining historical water quality information. These types of tests are conducted in the early summer and fall. Field guides are available that describe the testing procedures. Contact us for arranging a training program in this form of stream assesment.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT
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